**Act I**

**Part 1: A deserted place.**

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|  |  | *Thunder and lightning. Three* ***WITCHES*** *enter* |
|  |  | **FIRST WITCH**  When should the three of us meet again? Will it be in thunder, lightning, or rain? |
|  |  | **SECOND WITCH**  We’ll meet when the noise of the battle is over, when one side has won and the other side has lost. |
|  |  | **THIRD WITCH**  That will happen before sunset. |
|  |  | **FIRST WITCH**  Where should we meet? |
|  |  | **SECOND WITCH**  Let’s do it in the open field. |
|  |  | **THIRD WITCH**  We’ll meet Macbeth there. |
|  |  | *The* ***WITCHES*** *hear the calls of their spirit friends or “familiars,” which look like animals—one is a cat and one is a toad.* |
|  |  | **FIRST WITCH**  *(calling to her cat)* I’m coming, Graymalkin! |
|  |  | **SECOND WITCH**  My toad, Paddock, calls me. |
|  |  | **THIRD WITCH**  *(to her spirit)* I’ll be right here! |
|  |  | **ALL**  Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Let’s fly away through the fog and filthy air. |
|  |  | *They exit.* |

**Part 2: A heath.**

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| *Thunder. The three* ***WITCHES*** *enter.* | | | |
| **FIRST WITCH**  Where have you been, sister? | | | |
| **SECOND WITCH**  Killing pigs. | | | |
| **THIRD WITCH**  And you, sister? | | | |
| **FIRST WITCH**  A sailor’s wife had chestnuts in her lap and munched away at them. “Give me one,” I said. “Get away from me, witch!” the fat woman cried. Her husband has sailed off to Aleppo as master of a ship called the *Tiger*. I’ll sail there in a kitchen strainer, turn myself into a tailless rat, and do things to him— | | | |
| **SECOND WITCH**  I’ll give you some wind to sail there. | | | |
| **FIRST WITCH**  How nice of you! | | | |
| **THIRD WITCH**  And I will give you some more. | | | |
| **FIRST WITCH**  I already have control of all the other winds, along with the ports from which they blow and every direction on the sailor’s compass in which they can go. I’ll drain the life out of him. He won’t catch a wink of sleep, either at night or during the day. He will live as a cursed man. For eighty-one weeks he will waste away in agony. Although I can’t make his ship disappear, I can still make his journey miserable. Look what I have here. | | | |
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| **SECOND WITCH**  Show me, show me. | | | |
| **FIRST WITCH**  Here I have the thumb of a pilot who was drowned while trying to return home. | | | |
| *A drum sounds offstage.* | | | |
| **THIRD WITCH**  A drum, a drum! Macbeth has come. | | | |
| **ALL**  *(dancing together in a circle)* We weird sisters, hand in hand, swift travelers over the sea and land, dance around and around like so. Three times to yours, and three times to mine, and three times again, to add up to nine. Enough! The charm is ready. | | | |
| ***MACBETH*** *and* ***BANQUO*** *enter.* | | | |
| **MACBETH**  *(to* BANQUO*)* I have never seen a day that was so good and bad at the same time. | | | |
| **BANQUO**  How far is it supposed to be to Forres? *(he sees the* WITCHES*)* What are these creatures? They’re so withered-looking and crazily dressed. They don’t look like they belong on this planet, but I see them standing here on Earth. *(to the* WITCHES*)* Are you alive? Can you answer questions? You seem to understand me, because each of you has put a gruesome finger to her skinny lips. You look like women, but your beards keep me from believing that you really are. | | | |
|  | **MACBETH**  Speak, if you can. What kind of creatures are you? |
|  | **FIRST WITCH**  All hail, Macbeth! Hail to you, thane of Glamis! |
|  | **SECOND WITCH**  All hail, Macbeth! Hail to you, thane of Cawdor! |
|  | **THIRD WITCH**  All hail, Macbeth, the future king! |
|  | **BANQUO**  My dear Macbeth, why do you look so startled and afraid of these nice things they’re saying? *(to the* WITCHES*)* Tell me honestly, are you illusions, or are you really what you seem to be? You’ve greeted my noble friend with honors and talk of a future so glorious that you’ve made him speechless. But you don’t say anything to me. If you can see the future and say how things will turn out, tell me. I don’t want your favors and I’m not afraid of your hatred. |
|  | **FIRST WITCH**  Hail! |
|  | **SECOND WITCH**  Hail! |
|  | **THIRD WITCH**  Hail! |
|  | **FIRST WITCH**  You are lesser than Macbeth but also greater. |
|  | **SECOND WITCH**  You are not as happy as Macbeth, yet much happier. |
|  | **THIRD WITCH**  Your descendants will be kings, even though you will not be one. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo! |
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| **FIRST WITCH**  Banquo and Macbeth, all hail! | | |
| **MACBETH**  Wait! You only told me part of what I want to know. Stay and tell me more. I already know I am the thane of Glamis because I inherited the position when my father, Sinel, died. But how can you call me the thane of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor is alive, and he’s a rich and powerful man. And for me to be the king is completely impossible, just as it’s impossible for me to be thane of Cawdor. Tell me where you learned these strange things, and why you stop us at this desolate place with this prophetic greeting? Speak, I command you. | | |
| *The* ***WITCHES*** *vanish.* | | |
| **BANQUO**  The earth has bubbles, just like the water, and these creatures must have come from a bubble in the earth. Where did they disappear to? | | |
| **MACBETH**  Into thin air. Their bodies melted like breath in the wind. I wish they had stayed! | | |
| **BANQUO**  Were these things we’re talking about really here? Or are we both on drugs? | | |
| **MACBETH**  Your children will be kings. | | |
| **BANQUO**  You will be the king. | | |
| **MACBETH**  And thane of Cawdor too. Isn’t that what they said? | | |
| **BANQUO**  That’s exactly what they said. Who’s this? | | |
| ***ROSS*** *and* ***ANGUS*** *enter* | | |
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| **ROSS**  The king was happy to hear of your success, Macbeth. Whenever he hears the story of your exploits in the fight against the rebels, he becomes so amazed it makes him speechless. He was also shocked to learn that on the same day you fought the rebels you also fought against the army of Norway, and that you weren’t the least bit afraid of death, even as you killed everyone around you. Messenger after messenger delivered news of your bravery to the king with praise for how you defended his country. | | |
| **ANGUS**  The king sent us to give you his thanks and to bring you to him. Your real reward won’t come from us. | | |
| **ROSS**  And to give you a taste of what’s in store for you, he told me to call you the thane of Cawdor. So hail, thane of Cawdor! That title belongs to you now. | | |
| **BANQUO**  *(shocked)* Can the devil tell the truth? | | |
| **MACBETH**  The thane of Cawdor is still alive. Why are you giving me his title? | | |
| **ANGUS**  The man who was the thane of Cawdor is still alive, but he’s been sentenced to death, and he deserves to die. I don’t know whether he fought on Norway’s side, or if he secretly aided the rebels, or if he fought with both of our enemies. But his treason, which has been proven, and to which he’s confessed, means he’s finished. | | |
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| **MACBETH**  *(to himself)* It’s just like they said—now I’m the thane of Glamis and the thane of Cawdor. And the best part of what they predicted is still to come. *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* Thank you for the news. *(speaking so that only* BANQUO *can hear)* Aren’t you beginning to hope your children will be kings? After all, the witches who said I was thane of Cawdor promised them nothing less. | | |
| **BANQUO**  If you trust what they say, you might be on your way to becoming king, as well as thane of Cawdor. But this whole thing is strange. The agents of evil often tell us part of the truth in order to lead us to our destruction. They earn our trust by telling us the truth about little things, but then they betray us when it will damage us the most. *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* Gentlemen, I’d like to have a word with you, please. | | |
| ***ROSS****,* ***ANGUS****, and* ***BANQUO*** *move to one side.* | | |
| **MACBETH**  *(to himself)* So far the witches have told me two things that came true, so it seems like this will culminate in my becoming king. *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* Thank you, gentlemen. *(to himself)* This supernatural temptation doesn’t seem like it can be a bad thing, but it can’t be good either. If it’s a bad thing, why was I promised a promotion that turned out to be true? Now I’m the thane of Cawdor, just like they said I would be. But if this is a good thing, why do I find myself thinking about murdering King Duncan, a thought so horrifying that it makes my hair stand on end and my heart pound inside my chest? The dangers that actually threaten me here and now frighten me less than the horrible things I’m imagining. Even though it’s just a fantasy so far, the mere thought of committing murder shakes me up so much that I hardly know who I am anymore. My ability to act is stifled by my thoughts and speculations, and the only things that matter to me are things that don’t really exist. | | |

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| **BANQUO**  Look at Macbeth—he’s in a daze. |
| **MACBETH**  *(to himself)* If fate wants me to be king, perhaps fate will just make it happen and I won’t have to do anything. |
| **BANQUO**  *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* Macbeth is not used to his new titles. They’re like new clothes: they don’t fit until you break them in over time. |
| **MACBETH**  *(to himself)* One way or another, what’s going to happen is going to happen. |
| **BANQUO**  Good Macbeth, we’re ready when you are. |
| **MACBETH**  I beg your pardon; I was distracted. Kind gentlemen, I won’t forget the trouble you’ve taken for me whenever I think of this day. Let’s go to the king. *(speaking so that only* BANQUO *can hear)* Think about what happened today, and when we’ve both had time to consider things, let’s talk. |
| **BANQUO**  Absolutely. |
| **MACBETH**  Until then, we’ve said enough. *(to* ROSS *and* ANGUS*)* Let’s go, my friends. |
| *They all exit.* |

**Part 3: Macbeth’s Castle, Inverness**

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| *LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter from her husband, Macbeth.* |
| **LADY MACBETH**  “The witches met me on the day of my victory in battle, and I have since learned that they have supernatural knowledge. When I tried desperately to question them further, they vanished into thin air. While I stood spellbound, messengers from the king arrived and greeted me as the thane of Cawdor, which is precisely how the weird sisters had saluted me before calling me ’the future king!' I thought I should tell you this news, my dearest partner in greatness, so that you could rejoice along with me about the greatness that is promised to us. Keep it secret, and farewell.” |
| *(she looks up from the letter)* You are thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and you’re going to be king, just like you were promised. But I worry about whether or not you have what it takes to seize the crown. You are too full of the milk of human kindness to strike aggressively at your first opportunity. You want to be powerful, and you don’t lack ambition, but you don’t have the mean streak that these things call for. The things you want to do, you want to do like a good man. You don’t want to cheat, yet you want what doesn’t belong to you. There’s something you want, but you’re afraid to do what you need to do to get it. You want it to be done for you. Hurry home so I can persuade you and talk you out of whatever’s keeping you from going after the crown. After all, fate and witchcraft both seem to want you to be king.   |  | | --- | | **LADY MACBETH**  What news do you bring? | | **SERVANT**  The king is coming here tonight. | | **LADY MACBETH**  You must be crazy to say that! Isn’t Macbeth with the king, and wouldn’t Macbeth have told me in advance so I could prepare, if the king were really coming? | | **SERVANT**  I’m sorry, but it’s the truth. Macbeth is coming. He sent a messenger ahead of him who arrived here so out of breath that he could barely speak his message. | | **LADY MACBETH**  Take good care of him. He brings great news. |   *They all exit.* |
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